



# Lake Mead National Recreation Area Environmental Education

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## ***FIELD PROGRAM***

### **Grade 2 “Food for Life”**



Plants and animals living in a community create a food chain. A quarter-mile hike will help students compare what desert animals eat and explore the predator/prey relationship.

#### **THEME**

Plants and animals living in a community are all participants in a complex food chain.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will recognize one desert herbivore, carnivore and omnivore.  
Students will compare the different ways plants and animals obtain food.  
Students will determine what might happen when there is a missing link in a food chain.

#### **VOCABULARY**

carnivore - an animal that eats other animals  
food chain - a series of organisms, each eating or decomposing the previous  
herbivore - an animal that eats plants  
omnivore - an animal that eats both plants and animals

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Although at first glance the desert may seem to have little in the way of wildlife, it actually contains large, diverse populations. The variety of plant and animal species create an important niche in the desert ecosystem. In the Mojave Desert plants and animals interact in many different ways; animals help plants with pollination and seed dispersal, plants provide animals with food, water and shelter. Plants and animals depend on each other for their survival; when one plant or animal species becomes eliminated from a desert community, other animals who are dependent on that species for food are also affected.

### **BEFORE THE FIELD TRIP ACTIVITY**

Have your students create their own journals to be used during their program at Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NRA). Journals provide a means of recording observations in the field and can be accessed at a later date for comparison studies. Before the field trip have the students write the following words (each word on the top of a separate page): “carnivore”, “herbivore”, and “omnivore”. Please be sure the students bring their journals with them on the day of the field trip.

### **AFTER THE FIELD TRIP ACTIVITY**

During this activity, students will use their imagination and memory to create a visual in their mind, and then compare it to their own journals. Ask your students to close their eyes and visualize a plant or animal that they have seen at Lake Mead NRA on the day of their field program. Have them close their eyes and visualize the land, weather, sounds, smells, and colors. Do they remember anything growing? Was there evidence of wildlife? Have students then open their eyes and write down in words or draw a picture of what they had imagined. Students can now go through their journals and compare their journal notes with their memories. What was their favorite part of the field trip?

### **REFERENCES**

Cornett, James W., *Wildlife of the North American Deserts*  
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Peterson Field Guides, Houghton Mifflin Company, (1974)

Palmer, Ralph S., *The Mammal Guide: Mammals of North America  
North of Mexico*  
Doubleday @ Company, Inc., (1954)

Schmidt-Nielsen, Knut, *Desert Animals: Physiological Problems of  
Heat and Water*  
Dover Publications, Inc. (1979)

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE!** Your students can begin to make a difference wherever they live! Have your class come up with a project using the experience from their field trip to Lake Mead National Recreation Area to show others that they care about our desert community.



**Teachers!** - check out our new web site with an extensive classroom section:  
<http://www.nps.gov/lame/classroom>